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# Multiple paylines may vex some players

**QUESTION:** Today's machines seem so complicated. Lines going everywhere, coin amounts needed to insert confusing, and of course, try figuring out the payoffs. Most confusing though is multipliers and multiple paylines machines. Help! Also, is there any consistent way to win at playing these new machines? — Helen G.

**ANSWER:** Slots, like burnt toast, haven't really changed that much over the years. They all work the same way; you kiss a coin a fond farewell, insert it, pull the handle, and fish through pocket or purse for more money. If, by some weird brain short circuits, you think you have any chance of winning consistently, not a chance.

The only consistent winners at slots are the casino owners. Both the slots of old and today's cybernetic one-armed bandits are machines designed by wizards not, wherefore, you should never, ever, think you can beat these gambling



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marvels with regularity.

As to multipliers and multiple payline machines, here's the skinny. A multiplier is a machine that has a given payout for a certain symbol, and the number of coins you play multiplies it. For example, if the machine pays five coins for three bars when

you play one coin, it would pay 10 for the second coin and 15 for three coins played.

What I like about this machine is that it does not penalize you for not playing maximum coins.

If you are the type of player who typically plays one coin at a time, this is the type of machine you should look for. However, Helen, if you tend to play the maximum amount, look for a Bonus Multiplier machine. This machine operates like the multiplier except that it offers a bonus when you play maximum coins and hit the jackpot: Three treasure chests may pay 1,000 for one coin; 2,000 for two coins and 10,000 for maximum coins. As plain as day, the bonus makes it clearly worth going for the max.

As for Multiple Payline machines, they have more than one line of play, and each coin inserted activates a particular line. If you hit a winner on an activated line, whoopee!, but winning on a

non-activated line gets you nothing.

All of the slot machines have the information you need posted somewhere on the front. Before you sit down to play, I recommend taking a moment and studying the machine. True, some of the older machines had but three lines and some of the newer slots have lines criss-crossing in every direction, but if you just take the time to educate yourself on any machine you're tempted to play, you will become a smarter player (Now, there's an oxymoron to treasure: a smart slot player.) and this will help you pick the machine that is best for you.

**Q:** While watching the World Poker Tour on the Travel Channel, they used the term "belly buster." The game was moving so fast that I did not quite get what they meant by that term. So, what is a belly buster? — Chuck R.

**A:** That's nicey talk for the gut shot, Chuck. A belly buster is a draw to an inside straight:

a straight that can be made only with a card of one rank, usually somewhere in the middle. For example, you are holding a nine, eight, six and a five, and only the seven will give you a straight. Then there's the double belly buster. An example of a double belly buster would be a queen, 10, nine, eight and a six. This is technically an open-ended straight because either the jack or seven would make your hand.

## Gambling quote of the week

*"A man who can play delightfully on his guitar and keep a knife in his boot would make an excellent poker player."*

Winner J. Florence, "Handbook for Poker" (1891)

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